

C-7. SABBATICAL LEAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PASTORS AND CHURCH EDUCATORS IN THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHEASTERN ILLINOIS

Policy Statement

The Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois recommends to the sessions of its churches that full-time Pastors and Church Educators be granted a compensated sabbatical of at least three (3) months and up to six (6) months after six years of service to an individual church.

Rationale

“Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.”

Mark 6:30-32

A sabbatical will enable the pastor/educator to be renewed through the vital pursuit of continuing education, extended time spent in spiritual formation, or fresh mentoring by respected teachers. A sabbatical enables a pastor/educator to return to the responsibilities of the parish with new energy, spiritual vision and effectiveness.

Committee on Ministry Responsibilities

1. Review the sabbatical timetable and usage plan as submitted.
2. Serve as mediator in any concerns of session, educator, or pastor relative to the sabbatical.
3. Determine who will moderate the session in the pastor’s absence.

Pastor or Church Educator Responsibilities

1. Bring the sabbatical proposal before the session – at least in outline form – a minimum of six months before the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
2. Secure the approval of the session for the sabbatical proposal and work out the necessary coverage of pastoral and pulpit responsibilities.
3. Assure the session of continued service for at least one full year from the conclusion of the sabbatical.
4. Bring up to date all pending responsibilities as determined in consultation with the session before departing on a sabbatical.
5. Submit to the Committee on Ministry in writing the sabbatical timetable and outline of the plans.
6. Upon return, present an overview of the sabbatical experience to the session and the Committee on Ministry.

Session Responsibilities

1. Receive “for approval” the pastor’s/educator’s proposal for a sabbatical, at least six (6) months in advance of the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
2. Continue terms of call commitments to the pastor/educator during sabbatical leave.
3. Communicate to the congregation the importance and values to the church of a sabbatical.
4. Request a written overview of the sabbatical from the pastor/educator upon return.

Other Recommendations

1. It is recommended that session’s policies be included in the original terms of call or amended to the current terms of call as soon as is reasonable.
2. It is recommended that sessions create an annual budget line for sabbatical leave funds for future use.
3. Small congregations are encouraged to seek external support from agencies such as the Lilly Foundation*.
4. It is recommended that Presbytery and COM consider the possibility of creating a “roving sabbatical minister” who would be available during sabbatical times.

*The Louisville Institute is a Lilly Endowment program for the study of American religion based at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary.

See: <http://www.louisville-institute.org> & <http://www.louisville-institute.org/secondary/SGPLdetail.asp>